
DISQUISITIONS.



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Metaphysical and Literary,

BY

F. SAYERS, M. D. *R*

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DISQUISITION

19

Metaphysical and Literary



BY J. COOPER AND W. STREETER

FOR LONDON, AT TAYLOR'S CHURCH LANE, 1851.

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ERRATA.

PAGE

- 12, line 12, for *Belvidera* read *Belvedere*.
- 15, l. 3, for *cerrtainly* read *certainly*.
- 30, l. 9, for *melancbly* read *melancholy*.
- 31, after quotation insert *Paradise Lost*.
- 42, l. 3, for *Borgbesi* read *Borgheze*.
- 85, l. 3, after *before* insert a comma.
- 115, l. last, for *witbeld* read *withbeld*.
- 135, l. 15, for *consolitories* read *consolatories*.
- 145, l. 9, put out comma and *it*.

22 JY 63

OF BEAUTY.

~~53 VL 22~~



O F B E A U T Y.

AMONG the variety of natural and artificial appearances, which occasionally attract our notice, it is not difficult to discover many classes of objects, from the contemplation of which peculiar sensations of pleasure are generally experienced : the emotions produced by a view of one of these classes, the beautiful, although very impressivè, have something in them of a gentle and soothing kind; those excited by another class are of a more elevating nature, at the same time that they delight they also expand and exalt the mind, and have hence

B

been

been denominated sublime ; the agreeable feelings arising from a third class, the pathetic, are blended in some degree with emotions of pain, while the sensations which are derived from a fourth, the humourous or ridiculous, are connected with merriment or laughter.

The following enquiry will be confined to investigating the pleasure produced from objects of the beautiful kind only : a similar explanation might probably be extended to the rest.

Lest such an enquiry however should appear to some unnecessary, it will not be improper previously to state such objections as seem of the greatest force, against those theories of beauty which have most recently been offered to the public.

An artist of great eminence has taught that the line of beauty is a *curve of a peculiar shape,*
and

and that objects deviate from beauty in proportion as they deviate from such a curve. A slight consideration will convince us that this standard, however it may apply in some cases, is far from being universal; many figures bounded by 'strait lines, as a square, an isosceles triangle, a pyramid, a cube, are usually esteemed beautiful: in buildings also sharp angles must necessarily abound, and strait pillars, far from making a building deformed, produce more pleasing effects than curved ones; for if curved pillars appeared to support any considerable weight, they would instantly give us an idea of their bending under the weight, that is, of weakness, and such an idea would infallibly disgust; this theory then cannot be insisted upon.

Another author supposes beauty to consist in *simplicity*; to this it may be objected that a man, a ship, a pillar of the Corinthian order, variegated flowers, and many other

figures of a complex kind are notwithstanding beautiful; this explanation of beauty is therefore insufficient.

It has been asserted by a very celebrated writer that a union of several qualities in objects produces beauty; let us examine some of those which he supposes to be essential.

Littleness: to this it may be replied that we annex beauty to the form of an angel, yet

we consider an angel as being of larger size than the human species; that the Laocoon and

the Apollo of Belvidere, two of the most beautiful and perfect pieces of sculpture which Europe possesses, are both larger than life; this property of littleness therefore is not necessary to beauty.

—*Smoothness*: against this may be urged the beauty of many hirsute and prickly shrubs; in goats and sheep also, animals

exceedingly beautiful and picturesque, we meet with shaggy rough coats:—*Gradual variation of lines*: to this it may be objected, that flat

surfaces

surfaces are decidedly beautiful in a variety of situations, and that a building or apartment in which we could discover only curved or varying lines would be quite ridiculous:—*Delicacy*: neither can this be granted essential, as it would discard beauty from the stronger species of animals, from a nervous human figure, and from all buildings for defence. For the force of these objections, which appear sufficient to invalidate the theory of this author, an appeal may be hazarded to common experience.

Utility has been thought by some to be a quality which enters into every thing which is beautiful; but this also may be readily shewn to be fallacious. The appearance of manly strength in a female would not be considered as adding to her beauty, yet such strength might occasionally be useful; all orders of architecture, if equally strong and convenient, must, if this theory be true, be also equally beautiful;
a graceful

a graceful dancer, who is exercising a faculty perfectly useless, is regarded as one of the most beautiful appearances we can meet with, a person feeding voraciously, though employing powers absolutely necessary to existence, is an object rather disgusting than beautiful.

It was the opinion of Sir Joshua Reynolds that a kind of *central set of features*, that is, a set of features composed of those most commonly to be met with, and a central form also, would constitute beauty in the human race: to this it may be objected, that the greater number of countenances and forms which we meet with, are neither strikingly beautiful nor ugly, how then should features which are most common, and a form about the medium of those we most frequently meet, united in one person, be able to assume the character of perfect beauty? If this explanation be admitted, it would follow, that in any class of animals of which the individuals most resemble each other,
there

there would beauty be most generally diffused, and most peculiarly striking; this however is certainly not the case: it may be added too, that at the first view of any race of men or animals, whose appearance is not grateful to us, when their general features, or forms are principally noticed, at that very time we view them with the least pleasure; the first sight of the blacks in the West Indies is far from agreeable to Europeans, by dwelling among them for a time, many are at length discovered to be beautiful; yet the common form strikes first and the individual differences afterwards.

Enough has probably been urged to shew that none of the abovementioned theories of beauty is universally applicable: I will now enter upon that which appears to me less liable to objection.

It will readily be granted that those objects

jects which we are accustomed to call beautiful, make a pleasing impression upon the mind, but the mere pleasure of simple perception seems by no means to account for the great degree of enjoyment which the contemplation of certain objects produces; for however the palate may be gratified by particular dishes, the eye by a peculiar tint, or the sense of smelling by odoriferous substances, yet it is certain that the view of a beautiful object occasions in us much more exquisite feelings of pleasure than the most delicious food, the most brilliant colour, or the most grateful perfume: we must therefore seek for some other cause of this peculiar sensation of delight; this cause will be found to depend upon an association of ideas: with the forms which we esteem beautiful, it will appear *that certain pleasing ideas or emotions are associated in our mind*, which, upon the presentation of such forms, regularly arise, and produce those sensations which we attribute

bute to the beauty of the object. This power then, which an object possesses, of exciting pleasing ideas or emotions associated with it, is what determines us to ascribe to it beauty*.

Many proofs of this opinion may be advanced; there is none stronger perhaps than the effect of these associated ideas in changing an object which is at first horrible or disgusting to one of a contrary nature: a slight view of the bowels in the dead carcases of men or other animals fills us with the utmost disgust, yet in the mind of the anatomist, who has investigated the provident arrangement and well-ordered machinery of these important parts, they are so strongly associated with the ideas of wisdom and utility, that they are converted

* The first hint of the theory which I have now stated is to be found in the admirable work of Dr. Hartley.

into a beautiful and pleasing object of contemplation.

The inconstancy of our opinions with respect to the beauty or ugliness of certain habits is an argument of a similar kind: with fashionable dresses are associated the pleasing ideas of rank, of wealth, of gentility, and such dresses are therefore generally esteemed beautiful while they continue to be worn by the higher orders of society; but as soon as they have crept among the lower, the ideas associated with them are changed for others of a displeasing kind, vulgarity, poverty, and paltry imitation. of our superiors are now connected with the once fashionable habit, and the same form of dress which a few months before was considered as beautiful and becoming, is now an object of ridicule or dislike: scarcely is a year or two elapsed before these odious fashions are again
perhaps

perhaps adopted by the higher orders of society, and again received and admired*.

The ideas associated with fashionable dress have so strong an influence on the minds of many, and seem so closely connected with the persons of them who wear it, that the feelings of inconvenience are not unfrequently found to bend before its charms: in a neighbouring nation the spring habit was regularly assumed at a certain season of the year, and no inclemency of weather was sufficient to outweigh in the minds of the fashionable the captivating ideas of rank and of breeding.

The opinion which parents so commonly entertain of the beauty of their own offspring, who appear to others perhaps objects of dislike, or at least of indifference, is another argument in favour of this theory; the parents hav-

* See Alison's Treatise on Taste.

ing a variety of pleasing ideas associated with their own children which take place only in their minds.

The lover is much in the same situation with the parent : associating with the person of his mistress qualities which are peculiarly pleasing to him, he lavishes upon her form every attraction, and she appears to him perfect : to another, who has never discovered in her these qualities so pleasing to her admirer, her shape and countenance are perhaps totally uninteresting.

The effects of the unpleasing passions of hatred, revenge, and envy, in changing our opinion of personal charms are too well known to be dwelt upon : our great dramatic poet has addressed even the innocent messenger of misfortune with

“ This news has made thee a most ugly man.”

Pain

Pain and bodily infirmities also, if great, render us often incapable of relishing or even of perceiving beauty: a mind vacant from all ideas unfavourable to pleasing impressions, is absolutely necessary for our feeling them in their full force.

It may further be observed, in confirmation of this theory of beauty, that the most consummate form and features of the female of the human race, would be highly unpleasing in the male; the ideas of tenderness, mildness, and modesty, associated with the countenance of a beautiful female, and those of softness and delicacy connected with her frame, however delightful as the properties of a woman, by no means form the beauty of a man.

The form and features of a very beautiful European woman are by no means peculiarly
pleasing

pleasing to an American savage : he has been accustomed to associate with the shape and countenance of his swarthy females the qualities which are most agreeable to him ; and these qualities of course never arise in his mind so readily as when he contemplates those shapes and countenances and complexions to which he is accustomed.

In short, the frequent observation of the different effects produced upon different people by the same object is only to be explained by considering the different ideas with which this object is associated in their several minds, were there any thing specific in the object itself all must and would be similarly affected by it.

These arguments seem sufficient to prove that beauty is not inherent in forms, features,

tures or complexions, but depends entirely upon the ideas associated with them.

The theory which I have now been enforcing, holds good with respect to the beauties of the vegetable world, and to the various scenes of inanimate nature; the primrose and the snowdrop are indebted for their charms to the exhilarating ideas of the spring so strongly connected with them: with the rose is associated the gayest efforts of the lyric muse; with the myrtle the charms of Venus and the sports of the Loves, and with the laurel the triumphs of arts and of arms: hence the beauty so generally acknowledged in these classes of vegetables.

The beauty of landscapes arises from the ideas of peace, of health, of rural happiness, of pleasing solitude, of simple manners, of classical

fical imagery, &c. connected with the groupings of trees, with the lawns, and fields, and water which enter into their composition; of this I think every one will be convinced from observing the various but equally pleasant ideas associated with the scenes of nature in the mind of Milton, and which he has so admirably assorted and connected with these scenes as viewed by the gay or melancholy man.

When the Poet describes the landscape as beautiful to the cheerful mind, he associates with it the sprightly notes of the lark, the hounds and horn, the rising sun, the song of the shepherd, the frolics of the rustic labourers and their simple but joyous repasts, the sound of the merry bells, and the dances of the youths and the maids on a sunshine holiday: When a similar scene of nature is to be made beautiful to the pensive mind, he pitches upon another class

class of associations, the plaintive notes of the nightingale, the gloom of moon-light, the found of the distant curfew

Over some wide-water'd shore
Swinging flow with fullen roar,

the rushing blast and its hollow murmur, the shades of the grove, strange mysterious music, and the unseen genius of the wood.

It is scarce necessary to observe that in both these cases the beauty of the scenes of nature depends entirely upon the circumstances associated with them, and that it was even necessary for the poet to associate different circumstances with them as they were to be rendered pleasing to the gay or to the pensive man, the ideas which made them beautiful to the former would have made them disgusting to the latter.

D

It

It is also sufficiently evident, that we determine concerning the productions of the imitative arts of painting and sculpture by the same principles which occasion our decision with respect to the forms which they imitate, but to the usual set of pleasant ideas associated with the imitated object, there is another of a most delightful kind added when the objects are well represented, that of the genius and skill of the artist: this idea is so exceedingly grateful that it not unfrequently induces us to consider that as beautiful when imitated which is of itself disgusting*.

Our judgment too with respect to the beauty or ugliness of the works of the architect is similarly directed: the ideas of warmth, of convenience, of strength, of magnificence, of skill,

* This is remarkably the case in our admiration of some Dutch pieces.

and

and others of a pleasing kind, more or less associated with buildings, are what determine us to pronounce them beautiful in different degrees: among the structures which are more universally pleasing to Europeans may be reckoned the Grecian temple and the Gothic church, with the former we have associated the song of the poet, the classical tales of Grecian mythology, and the finished forms of Grecian gods; with the latter are strongly connected the impressive solemnities of devotion, and the wild but captivating stories of Gothic heroism and Gothic magnificence,

Of turneys and of trophies hung,
 Of pomp and feast and revelry,
 With masque and antique pageantry,
 Where throngs of knights and barons bold
 In weeds of peace high triumphs hold,
 With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
 Rain influence, and judge the prize
 Of wit or arms—

D 2

It

9

It may be observed too that in large or ornamental buildings, which are not Gothic, we are only pleased with the orders of Grecian architecture; with these orders the agreeable ideas abovementioned are associated, and any other form of building, as some of the whimsical orders delineated by Hogarth, has either some ridiculous or unpleasing association with it or is at least unconnected with any which is delightful; hence then we may reasonably conclude that the ideas which induce us to call a building beautiful, are merely associated, as in other instances, with peculiar forms and are not inherent in the forms themselves*.

* By critics in architecture indeed a certain fixed proportion of pillars, &c. is expected, as it is with these proportions *exactly* that *their* pleasing ideas are most numerous and strongly associated: those who have not been in the habit of attending so nicely to the parts of a building are satisfied with that general appearance in its architecture with which *their* pleasing ideas are associated, any little irregularity in proportion does not give to them an idea of imperfection as it does to the critic.

Nor

Nor do we decide on different principles with regard to the beauty of the various productions of the mechanic, with these the pleasing ideas of human ingenuity, of utility, of splendor, of elegance, of neatness, &c. are more or less associated and determine our judgments concerning them.

The same theory of beauty, in a more figurative sense perhaps, is also applicable to poetry: no one I believe will deny that the beauty of a poem depends upon the pleasing ideas or emotions which are produced by the various expressions that are used in it, but the principle of association goes so far that it is by no means unfrequent to find passages in our best English poets by which no clear or connected ideas are raised, or in which ideas even repugnant to sense or propriety, are to be detected, but which notwithstanding, merely from agreeable associations with the words, are generally received as beautiful,

beautiful, of this a variety of examples might be adduced; I shall produce a few.

And bid fair peace be to my fable shroud.

LYCIDAS.

This line is usually esteemed beautiful: it is a bold figure to bid peace to a shroud, but to bid fair peace be to a black shroud (a thing which never yet existed perhaps) is perfectly absurd: but fair gives a pleasing idea, and fable a melancholy one suited to the occasion, and therefore the line has been approved.

—— and tresses like the morn.

COMUS.

This passage is always read with pleasure, but what clear idea of the colour or shape of these tresses can be formed from our being told that they are like the morn? Yet the morn is a word with which a variety of pleasant ideas are associated and therefore it produces the emotion of beauty.

Now

Now gentle gales

Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
Native perfumes and whisper whence they stole
Their balmy spoils—

This passage (probably taken from a more simple and beautiful one of Shakespeare's) contains a contradiction: the gales are represented as loaded with the native perfumes of the garden and whispering at the same time from whence they were stolen.

Weave the warp and weave the woof,
The winding sheet of Edward's race,
Give ample room and verge enough
The characters of hell to trace.

GRAY'S BARD.

These lines so generally esteemed beautiful, or perhaps rather sublime, are open to many objections: they allude to a part of *Gothic* mythology which a *Welsh* or *Celtic* bard could scarcely be acquainted with and certainly did not believe: they arbitrarily disfigure the part of mythology

mythology hinted at, they give to the ghosts of the bards the employment of the fates, they direct these ghosts to weave a winding sheet, whereas the web of life was what the fates always wove: they order the bards to leave room to trace the characters of hell: if the poet means by characters of hell "bitter runes" as the Goths called them, setting out wrong indeed, he proceeds rightly; if by the characters are meant the dispositions of hell how can guilt, horror, pain, &c. be wrought in a loom? It reminds us of Anacreon who sportively directs the painter (if possible) to paint the hair of his mistress breathing odours: but the words winding-sheet and characters of hell are associated with ideas suitable to the subject, and we are satisfied without enquiring whether they are introduced with propriety.

Another example of glaring breach of costume in this justly celebrated piece is

Rob'd

Rob'd in the fable garb of woe

With haggard eyes the poet stood.

To this the writer was tempted by our affociations of grief with fable; it is well known that the Welch bards always wore white garments.

Many other examples might be brought forward from different authors but these are sufficient to explain my meaning*.

So great indeed is the power of affociation in forming the beauty of poetry, that in two celebrated passages of the most polished poets of Rome we find them trusting to it entirely to raise the proper ideas or emotions even from

* I am far from intending to defend this practice in poets because it has in many cases succeeded: when the passages are considered and their impropriety detected, the idea of imperfection or absurdity is joined with them and they are no longer beautiful.

an unfinished sentence; it will be readily seen that I allude to the "*quos ego*" of Virgil and the "*omnium*" of Terence; these words have proved sufficient to call up the ideas and emotions intended.

Poets have also frequently laboured in their descriptions, to imitate in words certain sounds which were suitable to the subject they were treating of; this increase of associated ideas, (if I may call it so) adds much to the beauty of the passage, thus Tasso describing the sound of the trumpet has

Al rauco suon della tartarea tromba,

Homer, speaking of the dashing of the stormy wave, uses the words

Αἴγιοι μεγὰρ ἐρεμεται σμαρυγίδε τε πόντος.

And Collins, describing the bat, has

With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing.

Let

Let us now apply this theory to Musick; it appears that those who are unskilled in the art, are chiefly pleased with simple expressive tunes, or with such as have ideas either of gaiety or pleasing melancholy associated with them: those on the other hand who are adepts in musick, are also delighted with more complicated pieces, with these they have associated the ideas of difficulty overcome, of a kind of social concord of parts, and of nicety of execution: the effect of association in musick is decisively ascertained by the wonderful pleasure which individuals receive from particular tunes, (heard by others with indifference) which are associated in their minds with scenes or with company which highly delighted them: the predilection which almost every nation has for its own music is another proof of the opinion I have been supporting; it is well known that a certain tune, by no means pleasing in general, was forbidden to be play'd among the

Swiss guards in the French King's service, the tune was one which is exceedingly popular in the Swiss cantons, and which was so strongly connected in the minds of the Swiss with the pleasures of their early youth and early habitation, that it produced emotions almost insupportable.

The cooing of doves, the bleating of sheep, and the lowing of kine, can only afford pleasure from exciting the pleasing ideas of rural scenery; what can render the sameness of the cuckoo's note so grateful but its connection with the spring and the opening beauties of nature?

The emotions, again, produced by the beating of a drum, a noise easily mistaken for the rattling of a cart, or the rolling of an empty barrel, is a very strong proof of the power of association in giving effect to sounds.

After

After this general application of the theory, I may now venture upon offering a few remarks on the standard of beauty.

From a consideration of the foregoing reasoning there is little room to expect that an universal standard can be decidedly fixed upon, as an object of general reference; yet something may be done in this way, and I think there is reason to conclude that our opinions of beauty are not so incapable of a rational defence or attack as has been generally supposed.

There appear to be certain excellencies which belong to each of the different classes of objects presented to us: these excellencies are more or less associated with certain forms, &c. of these objects, and by comparing the individuals of each class with one another we are able to discover with what forms these excellencies

lencies are more or less associated, and also which of the individuals partakes the most of that form with which the greatest number of the excellencies of its species are associated.

Among other excellencies of the male part of the human race may be reckoned understanding, courage, good-temper, grace, activity and strength of body; now we find by a frequent comparison of the faces and characters of men, that an open countenance and penetrating eye are *most commonly* united with talents and good-temper, and such a countenance of course excites from association ideas of these pleasing endowments. A dull and heavy eye on the other hand and a contracted brow we find often connected with a slowness of intellect and a harshness of temper*: upon the slightest view

*I do not mean that this is *always* the case: many exceptions are to be met with: but it is sufficiently general to form the association.

therefore

therefore of such countenances we should instantly pronounce the former beautiful and the latter ugly: a variety of faces are indeed daily presented to us in which our decision with regard to their beauty or ugliness is not so easy, all our judgments however are determined by the various degrees of mental excellencies or defects associated with them; nor can we wonder that on this subject a frequent difference of opinion should arise when the expression of the face is not decidedly marked; some must unavoidably associate with it, from various circumstances peculiar perhaps to themselves, more or fewer excellencies or defects than others; but whenever the expression is strongly marked I have seldom been able to detect much difference in opinions. With regard to the body, we observe that a great bulk of muscles and fat is moved often with difficulty, and never with activity, on the other hand, that a spare
and

and diminutive form, however active it may be, gives us no idea of strength or of grace, but, on the contrary, that we connect with it weakness and delicacy which are disgusting in a man: as therefore with too great a bulk of body is connected clumsiness and sluggishness, and with too small a bulk of body a want of strength and of dignity, we pitch upon a certain mean between the two with which we associate all the excellencies of the human form in man, and which we therefore denominate beautiful.

The same mode of reasoning may be applied to other classes of animals, as to horses for instance; with the form of a race-horse we connect swiftness, with that of a cart-horse strength, these horses have each one excellence of the species associated with their form, but a fine Arabian courser, with whose form is associated

fociated both swiftness and strength, will universally be esteemed more beautiful than either of the other two, in each of which there is a want of one great excellence of the species.

In the same manner from the comparison of landscapes, pictures, statues, buildings, &c. we shall be able to discover which has the more numerous ideas of the excellencies of their class associated with them.

In this way too we may arrive at some notion of the *ideal beauty* so much talked of by artists: from the contemplation of different individuals of a class, certain forms, features, &c. may be detected with which the excellencies of the species are usually associated, and these being all blended together into one piece may reach the highest perfection in their kind of which we have any idea. Phidias, says Cicero, formed his Minerva from the idea of

F beauty

beauty which he had in his own mind, and not from any particular object. The Farnesian Hercules, the Borghesi Mercury, and the Antinous of the Vatican are each beautiful; with the form of the first is connected strength, with that of the second activity, with that of the third grace; which of the three is most beautiful it is difficult to determine; they each want the excellencies in some degree of the other two; but do we hesitate to decide that the statue of the Vatican Apollo, with whose form strength, and activity, and grace, are all associated, is more beautiful than any of them? Surely not; this statue is, I believe, universally admitted by Europeans as their best standard of male beauty.

Hence then it follows, that that individual of a class of objects is justly to be esteemed more beautiful than the rest, with the whole of which, or with its component parts (when properly understood) the *greater number* of the excellencies

excellencies of its class are universally associated; the same may be asserted of any species of objects when compared with any other species of its kind, and that object may be justly esteemed a *standard of beauty* with the whole appearance, or with the component parts of which (when properly understood) *all* the excellencies of its kind are *universally* associated.

But I am afraid that an insurmountable obstacle exists to an agreement upon any universal standard of beauty, though what that standard would be were perfectly understood; I mean, the variety of natural and artificial forms among different nations, each of which has associated for the most part with the forms it is accustomed to see, the excellencies of its peculiar class. If with some all female perfections are associated with dark complexions, thick lips, snub noses and woolly hair, and with others they are connected with flowing

F 2

tresses,

treffes, vermeil-tinctured cheeks, and skin of snowy white, it is impossible to reconcile their differences, each nation must and will consider that object as most beautiful, with which they have associated from their infancy all or most of the excellencies which it is capable of possessing.

OF THE DRAMATIC UNITIES.

IT is justly remarked by Dryden that the unities, though in general accurately observed by the antient dramatists, are no where regularly enumerated and enforced by the antient critics: whether they considered them so evidently necessary to the perfection of theatrical compositions as to need no recommendation, or whether they thought that the genius of the poet was to be left unfettered by dogmatical regulations it is now difficult to decide: it is certain that in the *Agamemnon* of *Æschylus* there is a deviation from the unity of time, that in the *Ajax* of *Sophocles* there is a deviation from the unity of place, and that in the *Antigone*

Antigone of the same author the unity of action is violated: but whatever may have been the common opinion or practice of the ancients, the moderns have certainly produced theatrical compositions highly interesting and affecting, in which we find a total neglect of the unities; let us endeavour then to ascertain how far these regulations may be adhered to or violated with advantage,

As the grand rule by which every dramatic poet should be guided in the composition of his work is that of *preserving the probable*, and as nothing is to be admitted which opposes this rule, the best mode of determining upon the propriety of adhering to the unities will be to examine each of them with a reference to this standard.

First, as to the unity of *Time*. This unity has been arbitrarily fixed to twenty-four hours; had

had its bounds been rationally decided they would certainly have been limited to the time which the piece takes up in performing; any thing beyond this must be supplied by the imagination of the audience; but this appeared too severe a rule, and something is accordingly left for the imagination to supply: but if the common length of a dramatic piece when exhibited is three hours, who is able to decide that twenty-one hours besides may be passed over in the imagination, and neither more nor less? How arbitrary and absurd is such a determination. But even the preservation of this unity, as thus understood, not unfrequently forces the poet to a palpable violation of the probable: the crowding together of unmotivated and unlikely events commonly occurs in those modern pieces in which every thing is arranged to take place in twenty-four hours; as in *Cato*, and *Venice Preserved*; in the most perfect plays of antiquity also the preservation
of

of the unity of time has not failed in producing the same error; in the *Œdipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles the arrival of the messenger who brings an account of the death of Polybius, is made, with much improbability, exactly to suit the time in which the message that he brings is peculiarly important; in the *Medea* of Euripides also *Ægeus* is introduced at the latter end of the play merely because *Medea*, at that time, stands in need of a protector, and in the *Hippolytus* of the same author, as well as in the *Agamemnon* of *Æschylus*, we find a variety of important incidents improbably compressed into the space of twenty-four hours.

The period of one day is seldom long enough to produce those great resolves or evolutions of character which are absolutely required in dramatic compositions: is it probable that the mind can be so affected by the occurrences of
a few

a few hours that it should immediately determine on many or even one important action? before decisive steps are resolved upon, much time is spent in self-contemplation, or in consulting others; then to effect these resolves opportunity must be awaited; but if this unity is to be preserved, how often will it happen that the progress of various feelings, the flow resolves of a mind hesitating on a most important concern, and a forced concurrence of circumstances, must all be hastened into the compass of twenty-four hours? the gradual change of Macbeth's character could never have taken place in such a time; nor could scarcely the violent temper of Othello have been worked upon, in so short a space, to destroy a wife whom he doated on, and who was before unsuspected.

Another observation may be made on this subject; few of the hearers of a piece *accurately* compute the time which is supposed to elapse in

its progress, and the beauty of this unity therefore is entirely unknown to the audience; they seem merely to measure the time which passes while action is absolutely carrying on before them, and leave that between the acts to be lengthened or shortened at the pleasure of the poet; thus if a messenger be dispatched only two miles at the beginning of an act and returns before it is over, the audience are struck with the improbability of it; but if he sets out upon a journey of twenty miles and returns at the beginning of the next act, they feel no difficulty in imagining a time sufficient for the journey to have elapsed.

But it may be asked has the poet then an unbounded privilege in respect to the violation of the unity of time? Certainly not; he must keep within the limits of probability; and I think on this account the following rules should be attended to:

First

First, the appearance of the characters should never be so altered by time supposed to be elapsed that the audience should not immediately recognise them for the same: thus Macbeth fighting in the fifth act with Macduff, is well known from his appearance to be the same who killed Duncan in the first act: some time must have elapsed between these events; we may reasonably conclude more than a twelvemonth; but his person is still unaltered; if on the other hand thirty years had been supposed to have passed, and Macbeth came decrepid and hoary upon the stage, we should feel great difficulty in imagining him to be a character whom we had seen before. The length of time supposed to elapse in the *Winter's Tale* is attended with the disagreeable effect which I am mentioning, in the beginning of the piece Perdita is shewn to the audience as an infant, and at the end of it she is married to Florizel.

The next rule is, that so much time should never be supposed to elapse as would alter the disposition of the persons of the play in such a manner as to prevent the probable continuance of the piece; all violent passions, and those are chiefly the passions of tragedy, by their very nature tend to grow weaker, at least this is usually the case: if a person, for instance, who had just resolved to stab his enemy, should be transported to a distant country for five years and then be brought back, is it probable that his resentment would not be abated, or that his resolution would not be changed?

And lastly, the poet should never force his audience to conceive any character so long absent, that more must have been transacted during his absence than really takes place in the piece: in this case the audience have to imagine two different periods of time to elapse at once: I will give an instance of what I mean :

mean: the son of Polonius, in Hamlet, sets out upon his travels at the beginning of the play, and, after making a tour of considerable length, returns a finished gentleman at the end of it; this is disgusting to us; a few weeks is the utmost time which we suppose to pass in this piece, and is it probable that a person should travel through Europe in that period?

With some limitations, we may therefore conclude that this unity may be violated with advantage.

Secondly, as to the Unity of *Place*. A strict preservance of this unity is often attended, like that of the other, with a breach of probability; poets are tempted by it to force their characters into a spot in which there is no other reason for their assembling but the rule laid down; Dennis has very justly ridiculed
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the adherence to this unity in the tragedy of Cato; but even in the play which is esteemed a perfect model the same improbability occurs; in the *Œdipus Tyrannus* the scene is laid in the market-place before a temple; to this place then all the characters are forced, and publicly debate about their most important concerns, either in the presence of the priests or of the chorus of citizens: but is it probable that this spot should be fixed upon by *Œdipus* as the proper place for an enquiry so interesting to him? When the business is entirely of a public nature, as at the opening of the piece, there is some excuse for it, but after he begins to suspect that a terrible evil is threatening him, is it likely that he would receive the proofs which condemn him exposed to the insults or revenge of a suffering people? In the *Œdipus Coloneus* also a striking breach of probability arises from a preservation of this unity; the scene of the play is part of the
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grove of the furies and the ground adjoining to it; in this spot all the characters of the piece assemble and all the conversations pass, yet the chorus declare at the opening of the play, that they fear to discourse when near the sacred wood, and scarcely dare even to cast their eyes upon it.

Indeed it is at first sight exceedingly improbable that many actions, and particularly important ones, should be all transacted in one place.

Dr. Johnson, in his preface to Shakspeare, has observed that it is as easy to fancy ourselves in any given place at the beginning of an act as at the beginning of a play: this observation appears to me not strictly true: we have the remembrance in our minds of being in a certain place before the second act, and we have associated the place we were in before with

with the characters which were represented to us, so that it is not equally easy to fancy ourselves in a new place, particularly at a great distance from the former one. There seems to be more difficulty in acquiescing in a change of place than in the passing of time; but then the difficulty only arises in changes to places very distant from each other, while the mind feels no repugnance to passing from one place to another which is near; thus the transition of the scene, in Macbeth, from Scotland to England is very offensive, but the change from the outside to the inside of the castle is followed with the greatest ease, particularly when assisted with a change of paintings on the stage; when Iachimo passes from Italy to England we have some difficulty in thinking it the same person that we lately saw so many miles distant, but when we see him pass from the drawing-room to a chamber in the same palace, we feel no impediment to such a change of place: it
feems

seems therefore that this unity, though it may be violated with the greatest probability in a small degree, cannot be so safely broken in upon with boldness as that of time.

It is always preferable in cases of change of place to a great distance, that they should happen between the acts; the reason for this is evident from what I said on the preceding unity; a considerable time must be imagined to have past before such a change could be effected.

Thirdly, as to unity of *Action*, it may be observed, that provided the underplots have an evident connection with the grand catastrophe of the play, they may be introduced with the greatest probability, and are so far proper; but when this is not the case the mixture is certainly injudicious: in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the remarkable absurdity and

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want of connection in the underplot, or rather underplots, is very striking; but in the Tempest where they are evidently promoting the great business of the piece, or are at least probably connected with it, they are seen with pleasure: upon this ground, it may be said, that scenes of gaiety may be introduced into a tragic piece; they may so; the gay and the sorrowful often appear together in nature, and therefore they may upon the stage; but it is not by every dramatist that this mixture should be attempted; the effects produced by gay scenes certainly indispose the mind for again assuming the tone of grief, and none but the hand of a consummate master can lead us at pleasure through the most contrary passions.

Another reason for the violation of this unity, in the degree I have mentioned, is, that we find in nature that many agents are usually employed

ployed to produce great events, and that some of these agents are forwarding it without design, and while pursuing a plan entirely with a different view ; thus ambition may be made the tool of revenge, and love the tool of ambition.

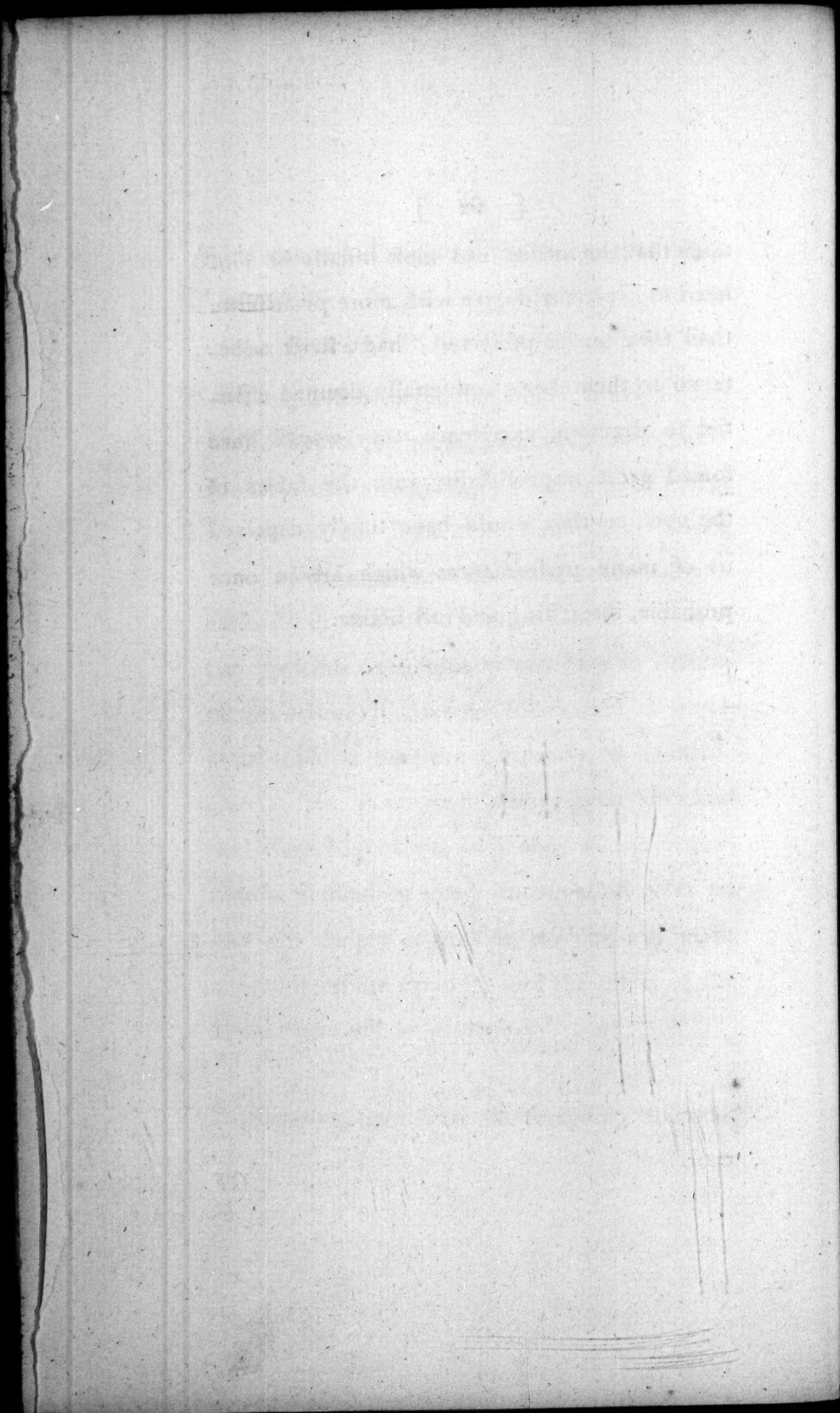
A strict preservation of this unity would entirely exclude a set of plays which are highly pleasing both in the closet and on the stage, I mean historical plays, and such as are directed to the evolution of some character: in most of these plays I think the unity of action may be considered as sufficiently preserved, provided all the events have some probable influence on the character brought forward, and are made to center in it as to their ultimate effects: this is the case in King John and King Richard the Third, where most, if not all of the occurrences are connected with

some material changes in the fortunes of these kings.

It may be here urged that I have hitherto taken probability as my guide, and that it is certainly probable that two or more plots may be carrying on at the same time and place, which have no connection with each other: this is undoubtedly true; but though a preservation of the probable is absolutely necessary to dramatic perfection, it does not follow that *all* which is probable is therefore prudently to be introduced; the poet must always keep in mind the interesting of his audience; if the attention be divided by many unconnected parts no one will deeply engross it, no one will make a due impression upon it, and the effect of the whole piece will be weakened.

It appears then from the foregoing observations

tions that the unities can most usually be violated to a certain degree with more probability than they can be preserved; had a strict adherence to them been universally deemed essential to dramatic excellence, they would have forced great improbability into the fables of the poet, or they would have totally deprived us of many performances which are at once probable, interesting and instructive.



O F P E R C E P T I O N.

IT is an opinion very generally admitted that the mind is capable of perceiving more than one idea at the same instant of time; many, I believe, consider this opinion as proveable by actual experiment; and metaphysicians, in treating of complex ideas, have usually taken it for granted: it does not appear indeed to be of much importance to us whether ideas are presented to the mind synchronously, or whether the one succeeds to the other without any perceptible interval of time; but as a matter of curiosity a few observations on this subject may not be thought uninteresting by some.

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If we reflect upon the surprising velocity with which ideas pass through the mind, and the remarkable rapidity with which the mind turns itself, or is directed, from one object of contemplation to another, this might alone give us some suspicion that we may probably be mistaken in supposing ideas to be synchronously perceived.

Other arguments may be adduced to strengthen this suspicion: it will be granted, I believe, that the mind, whether immaterial, or the result of organization, has certainly a wholeness or unity belonging to it, and that it is either not composed of parts, or that no one of the parts from which it originates is, by itself, mind; in this case it is difficult to conceive how two ideas should be impressed upon the mind at the same instant, for this would be supposing that part of the mind could receive one idea, and part another at the same time;

time; but if the parts do not perceive singly this is evidently impossible: if on the other hand this self-division of the mind does not take place, then, if two ideas are nevertheless to be perceived at the same instant, it would seem that these ideas must be so blended with each other that neither of them could appear distinct.

If we examine the manner in which a complex idea is perceived, I think we shall find very clearly that the whole of such an idea is never present to the mind at once: in thinking of a centaur, for instance, can we at the same moment be thinking of the parts of a man and the parts of a horse? Can we not almost detect the gliding of the mind from the one to the other? In contemplating the complex idea, gold, are the ideas of its colour, ductility, hardness, and weight, all present to the mind at the same instant? I think if we accurately

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attend to it, we shall find a perceptible time has elapsed before this complex idea has been perfectly formed in our mind: but if all the parts of a complex idea cannot be recalled at the same instant, is it not reasonable to infer that these parts were also singly impressed and not all originally perceived at the same instant? Nay, we know from actual experience that this is usually the case.

Whether these considerations alone should induce us to mistrust the opinion of our perceiving many ideas synchronously may be still a matter of doubt: it is not difficult to prove, what tends to corroborate them strongly, that a certain degree of attention of the mind appears absolutely necessary for the perception of any ideas at all.

If any one will make the experiment of
talking

talking on one subject while he is thinking on another, he will find it impossible, without evidently perceiving himself to falter with respect to one of the subjects, or to forget it altogether for a moment; and his conversation, while he is speaking on a subject different from that on which he is thinking, will certainly be broken and confused: absence of mind, as it is called, is another proof that a person cannot attend to two trains of thought at the same time; the person whose thoughts are engaged with something different from the conversation before him, will be often found to be ignorant of all that has past; and the time at which his absence forsakes him, and at which he turns his attention to the conversation which the company are carrying on, may not unfrequently be detected.

It is a well-known fact that people deeply engaged on any particular subject, either in

reading or in conversation, hear not the noises which would at another time affect them.

Those who have long dwelt in a situation exposed to the noise of bells, or to that occasioned by workmen at their business, at length are unconscious of the noise of the bells or of the workmen; this must be entirely owing to a want of attention, for when they are told of the noise they listen and hear it immediately.

When the mind is deeply engaged in thought, a degree of cold, which would have been else sufficiently felt, has scarcely been at all perceived; for no attention of the mind was directed to it; as soon as the investigation is finished, or interrupted, the cold is again felt, for the mind is again at leisure to attend to it.

It is an aphorism of Hippocrates, and I believe a very just one, that of two concomitant

tant pains the greater obscures or relieves the less: this seems to depend upon a similar cause to that of the facts just mentioned: the mind is so occupied with the greater pain as not to attend to and feel the less: but when the greater is removed the less is then perceived.

But not only will one pain by this means prevent the attention to, and consequent perception of another, but pleasure also will for a while prevent the feeling of pain: it is a common practice to attempt to divert the attention of those in pain from the pain to something agreeable; this is frequently done with success: and in proportion as the mind of such people is occupied by something interesting and pleasant in the same proportion are they less conscious of pain.

At the performance of a surgical operation a spectator, who is unused to such sights, feels

a considerable degree of pain and of disgust, whereas the attention of him who is operating is so totally engaged with the business he is performing, and with the manner in which he is to execute it, that every feeling of pain or disgust is by him unattended to, and consequently felt very slightly or rather not at all.

In cursorily examining any object whatsoever many parts are not perceived by the mind, though actually presented to the sight; but if these parts which have escaped notice are pointed out as worthy of examination, or if the attention of the mind be in any way called to them, they are immediately perceived: this frequently happens to us in viewing buildings: and, for the same reason, the idea of the external shape of the human body is much more complete in the mind of the painter, or anatomist, than of those who have less studied its conformation.

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It is a fact well ascertained that those who walk in their sleep usually do it with their eyes open and fixt, but, if a candle or light be presented to them they shew no appearance of perceiving it; this is probably caused by the attention of the mind being otherwise taken up.

These arguments, and others of a similar kind might be adduced, seem to prove that a certain attention, or direction of the mind to the object before it, is absolutely necessary to the perceiving of that object; and if even the simple ideas of pain, sound, and light, cannot be perceived without this attention, it surely follows that it is equally requisite for the perception of other simple ideas; this attention of course then must be transferred, however rapidly, at each perception; and such a transfer of attention must occupy some time, though it may be generally imperceptible:

ible: hence then the opinion is much strengthened that more than one idea cannot be perceived by the mind at the same instant of time *.

* Left it should appear that the opinion maintained above is unfavourable to the the theory of Association, which I have adopted in a former Essay, and shall have recourse to in a subsequent one, I would observe that Dr. Hartley (vol. I. C. i. Prop. 10) admits of *both synchronous and successive* association; the opinion I have defended is certainly incompatible with the former of these; but without affecting the *consequences* of Association, it only simplifies the *mode* in which it is produced.

OF DISINTERESTED PASSIONS.

IT will be readily allowed by every one, that, among the various passions which are to be found in the human mind, we meet with a certain class which prompt us to promote the happiness of others, and which are completely gratified by the production of such happiness, whether arising from exertions which they themselves occasion, or from any other causes whatsoever. Instances of the violence of these affections are not unfrequently to be met with; the parent may be seen to sacrifice his comfort, or even his life, for a darling child; the wife for her husband; the lover for his mistress; and

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the patriot for his country: history affords indubitable testimony in favour of such exertions, and we cannot ourselves be utter strangers to them in some degree or other.

These passions, having apparently for their sole aim the happiness of others, are named *disinterested*; let us endeavour to investigate their origin.

It will not be improper previously to point out the formation of those other passions which are evidently selfish.

When an infant is first born, there is every reason to suppose that he is born without ideas: they are rapidly communicated, through the medium of the senses, by various appearances around him, and by various occurrences which happen to him: the same senses are also the means

means of conveying to him pleasure and pain; these are the hinges on which the passions turn, and till the child is acquainted with these sensations, it would appear that no passion could be formed in his mind; for till he has felt pleasure and pain, how can he desire any object or wish for its removal? How can he either love or hate? Let us observe then the manner in which love and hatred are formed, for on these passions depend all the rest: when a child endures pain, and is able to detect the cause of it, the idea of pain is connected in his mind with that of the thing which produced it; and if the object which occasioned pain be again presented to the child, the idea of pain associated with it arises also; this idea consequently urges the child to avoid or to remove the object, and thus arises the passion of dislike or hatred.

In the same manner the passion of liking or love is readily formed in the mind of a child from the association of pleasant ideas with certain objects which produced them, and when these objects are presented to him the associated pleasure arises in the mind with them, and prompts the child to pursue or to retain the agreeable object; this is the passion of love.

The passions hope and fear are states of the mind depending upon the good or bad prospect of gratifying love or hatred, and joy or sorrow arises according to the final success or disappointment which attend the exertions produced by love or by hatred: out of these passions, which have all a perceptible relation to our own good, and are universally acknowledged to be selfish, all our other passions are formed.

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The appearance then of a set of passions whose object seems to be the good of *others* and not our own, may be considered as an anomaly in the human mind: some philosophers have imagined that they must of course be innate; but our other passions are evidently not innate; they depend upon pleasure and pain, and these are not experienced till we come into the world: this hypothesis then is perfectly unsatisfactory, and totally contradicts all that we know of the nature of the human mind: the following explanation of their origin is therefore more to be relied upon.

In the history of the human mind we find many instances of our dropping an intermediate idea, which has been the means of our connecting two other ideas together: thus in learning the Greek language through the medium of the Latin, we at length cease to interpose a Latin word between the Greek ones
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and the English signification of them, and we associate Greek words immediately with English ones; *finally*, we even cease to interpose the English words also, and associate ideas directly with the Greek words themselves: thus, also, in studying mathematics, we have no association of truth with a proposition when first presented to us, but after we have gone through the proofs and forgotten them again entirely, the association of truth so connected with the proposition will still remain with it, when at any future time it is offered to our mind.

Another clear example of a similar kind is to be seen in the love of money, or avarice: money is at first desirable or beloved as actually affording a variety of comforts; pleasant ideas are thus connected with money: but in due time the link which has joined them together is forgotten, though the idea of pleasure still remains connected with money;

money ; then money is fought for and loved, for the sake of the pleasant ideas connected with it, without any farther enjoyment of it whatever : the greatest lovers of money never spend it, but always accumulate ; the possession of it being the only gratification which they aim at ; but it is plain that this would never have happened, unless there had been originally some tie by which they connected these pleasant ideas with money, though this tie is at length forgotten * : for let us suppose there was a country in which gold and silver, from their abundance, were of no value at all, and where all trade was carried on by barter, in such a country, no one would seek to accumulate money, for he could never have any means of associating with it pleasant ideas, and avarice would of course have for its object the accumulation of something else.

* See Gay's Preliminary Discourse to King's Origin of Evil.

To apply what has been said to the disinterested passions: let us suppose that any individual has done to us many offices of kindness, and has consequently much contributed to our happiness; it is natural for us to seek with some anxiety for the continuance of those pleasures which he is able to communicate: but we soon discern that the surest way of obtaining this continuance of his friendly offices is to make them, as much as possible, a source of pleasure to himself; we therefore do every thing in our power to promote his happiness in return for the good he has conferred upon us, that thus we may attach him to us as much as we are able: hitherto all is plainly selfish; we have been evidently endeavouring for the sake of our own future gratification to promote the happiness of this person; but observe the consequence: we have thus, by contemplating the advantage to be derived to ourselves from promoting the prosperity of our friend, learnt
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to associate a set of pleasant ideas with his happiness; but the link which has united them gradually escapes us, while the union itself remains: continuing to associate pleasure with the well-being of our friend, we endeavour to promote it for the sake of this *immediate* gratification, without looking farther; and in this way, his happiness, which was at first attended to only as a means of future enjoyment, finally becomes an end: thus then the passion which was originally selfish, is at length *disinterested*, its gratification being completed merely by its success in promoting the happiness of another: it is easy to observe also that from associating pleasure with the happiness of an individual when we procure it ourselves, that it must of course soon follow, that we should experience pleasure from a view of his happiness any way produced; such happiness raising at all times pleasant ideas when it is presented to our minds: this is another feature

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of a disinterested affection, to feel delight from the mere increase of happiness in the object whom we love*.

The origin of patriotism may be similarly traced: the pleasures which our country affords us are numerous, and powerful in their action; the wish to perpetuate the enjoyment of these pleasures includes the wish to promote the safety and welfare of our country, without which many of them would be interrupted or lost; all this is evidently selfish; but,

* It may be here objected perhaps that parents seem to have an *instinctive disinterested love of their offspring*: surely the love of a parent for a new born infant is not usually equal to that for a child of four or five years old; when a child is first born the prospect and hopes of future pleasure from it are sufficient to make a parent anxious for its preservation, and common humanity towards a helpless object would also operate in the care of it: as the child grows up the hope of future enjoyment from it must increase; hence would pleasure be associated with the well-being of the child; and in due time the love for the child would consequently become disinterested.

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as in the former case, it finally becomes disinterested: pleasant ideas are thus strongly connected with the welfare of our country ; but the tie which has bound them together at length escapes our notice ; the prosperity which was at first desirable as a means of future enjoyment becomes itself an end : we feel a delight in such prosperity, however produced, and we look not beyond this immediate delight.

In the same way may we account for the formation of that *Esprit de Corps* which has in many cases prompted to considerable exertions, without any view of other gratification, than the success of these exertions. When we become a member of a particular profession, we wish to promote the interest of that profession, with a view at first to be ourselves benefited by its prosperity ; this is the means of associating pleasure with the welfare of our profession, in due time this tie is forgotten, and the passion

becomes disinterested, having for its sole object the pleasure derived from the welfare of the class of men to which we belong.

It is again not difficult to observe in what manner a general disinterested benevolence takes place in a mind which has already received pleasure from the happiness of a few: from associating pleasure with the happiness of these few, the transition is easy towards associating it *with happiness in general*, with the happiness of any being, whether produced by ourselves or by any other causes whatever.

From the foregoing remarks then we may conclude that disinterested passions are not innate, but that they may be traced like our other passions, to feelings of regard for ourselves*.

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* If it should be here urged that children at a very early age shew signs of disinterested affection by freely
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If any one, in consequence of what has been said, should view with less respect or admiration than before the exertions of the disinterested passions, it is no fair consequence of the explanation which I have brought forward: any passion whose object is the happiness of those around us must ever be lovely, and is it less lovely because it is fixed on the same basis as our other passions? Certainly not; we ought rather to contemplate with peculiar pleasure that masterly arrangement of mind, which

parting with their playthings, &c. to others, I should say that this does not appear to be generally the case with children, as they are much more openly selfish than adults; and that when it does happen it is commonly from the fear of their parents' rebukes, or from the hope of their applauses. In very young infants it is certainly not to be observed at all: and children may perhaps in some instances form at a very early period, in the usual manner, a disinterested attachment to their playmates; I only contend that it does not appear in any case to be born with them.

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thus confers a power upon selfishness itself of converting the pleasure and welfare of others into a source of the greatest delight to ourselves.

OF THE EVIDENCE FOR CHRISTIANITY.

DR. Butler has observed, in his *Analogy*, that the evidence for Christianity consists of many particulars, the full effect of which will only arise from their being collectively considered: several excellent treatises have already been produced, in which a variety of these particulars have been urged with much force; it still appeared to me, however, that the more important parts of the evidence might be advantageously stated in a manner somewhat different from any which I remember to have met with, and that in such a statement I could best introduce some observations which had occurred

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red to me on the subject. This is attempted in the following disquisition.

Were any person perfectly unprejudiced to be presented with the New Testament for perusal, as a work consisting of the writings of different men, with their names prefixed to these writings, no suspicion could arise in his mind that they were not the real productions of these men, any more than that Cicero was not the author of the orations attributed to him, or that Pliny did not write the epistles to which his name is annexed: and in reading the work itself, the style, the matter, the simplicity of the narration, and the frequent occurrences of the names of the authors in their compositions, would sufficiently convince him (as on other occasions) that the different parts of the collection before him were really written by those to whom they are attributed, and were perfectly suitable to the

the character and situation of the authors and to the time in which they lived.

But even if this decisive internal evidence were not deemed sufficient, if other proofs were to be demanded of the genuineness and antiquity of the books of the New Testament, we should be at no loss for such proofs: both their genuineness and antiquity are clearly established by the *testimony of Authors* who lived in the same period with the writers themselves, or who were their immediate successors; these authors, at a very early date, indubitably quote passages from the New Testament, in the same manner as Aristotle quotes Homer and the tragedians, and as Cicero quotes Ennius, that is apparently from memory, without having the books before them, but certainly from the books themselves; and in the beginning of the second century (as is reasonably to be expected) the quotations are found still more

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frequent and more full: if this did not appear satisfactory, as in any other case it would, it can be shewn that in a very few years after the publication of the New Testament, large bodies of men received it as the guide of their belief*. It appears then *that*

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* Whoever will read Dr. Lardner's account of, and extracts from the Fathers, from Barnabas to Irenæus, will find the most unquestionable evidence of the genuineness of the New Testament: *All* these Fathers, from the year 70 or sooner, (for some place Clement in 61) to the year 178, clearly quote from, (using the expression "as it is written," and other marks of quotation) and allude to various parts of the New Testament: their quotations and allusions which are very abundant and very copious, agree accurately, the former as to words, and the latter as to meaning, with that copy of the New Testament which we now possess: in the writings of these Fathers also is to be found the most decisive testimony that the four Gospels, which we now receive as true ones, were really written by those to whom they are attributed, the Apostles St. Matthew and St. John, and the companions of the Apostles, St. Mark and St. Luke; and it also appears that the Acts, Epistles and Revelation are genuine productions, the former of St. Luke, and the rest of the authors whose names they bear, or to whom they are
now

the genuineness and antiquity of the books of the New Testament are as well, or rather, better attested than the genuineness and antiquity of any prophane Author whatsoever.

I conceive also that no one would for a moment deny that an unprejudiced reader would immediately give the same credit * at least to
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now attributed : in the time of Justin Martyr, about 133, if not before, portions of the New Testament were read and expounded to the churches : the resurrection and other miracles were firmly credited in the times of these Fathers, some of whom were acquainted with the Apostles themselves, and were of course the best judges possible of the genuineness of the books of the New Testament : their evidence may be considered as that of the great body of Christians of their time. Heathen Authors also of early date refer to various parts of the New Testament, and quote certain miracles as being recorded in it.

See Lardner's Credibility, vol. 2.

* It might justly be said *more* credit, for we find in the New Testament the relations of four different Authors of the history of their own times, and these relations agree in such a manner as to reflect the strongest authenticity

the events recorded in the New Testament, which are not miraculous, as he would to the natural events recorded by Thucydides, by Julius Cæsar, or by Sallust; as being related either by eye-witnesses, or by those who were intimately connected with them; the events in Judæa narrated by such men, have the same claim to belief as those recorded to have happened in Greece; the voyage of St. Paul bears the same marks of natural relation as the journeys of Cæsar: the simple representation of affairs in the New Testament, the various par-

upon each other, no one of them being a *copy* from any of the rest: we find also their accounts corroborated by the Epistles of their cotemporaries: now can any thing be conceived more miraculous than that four men should separately compose a history entirely from their own imagination, without any foundation in truth, and that the histories of these four should happen to agree with each other in a variety of important particulars? And besides this, that authors of the same time should confirm by their letters the inventions of these four men? Yet such must be the belief of him who disputes the truth of the Evangelists' narrations.

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particulars of customs, manners, times, persons, conversations and places, the mention of circumstances apparently disadvantageous to the writers themselves, or to those connected with them, the discourses and character of Christ, and the design of his mission, as stated by the Evangelists, are most abundant and convincing proofs that the Authors did not fabricate the work in their own imagination*.

Neither is external evidence deficient on this head; the suffering of Jesus Christ under Pontius Pilate is recorded by Tacitus; the existence of the Princes and Governors mentioned in the New Testament, the Roman and Jewish customs, the treatment of the Jews by the Romans, the exact time said to have been spent in the building of the temple, the famine,

* See Lardner's Posthumous Sermons on the internal evidence for Christianity.

and the banishment of the Christians under Claudius, and other particulars in the sacred writings are confirmed by the clearest testimony of heathen authors*: *the New Testament, therefore possesses all the marks of truth which any history can possess.*

Neither can any one reasonably assert that although the greater part of the New Testament may be genuine and true, that it is probable that the miracles are interpolated inventions of men who did not write the histories; we never decide in this manner with respect to prophane authors; we do not believe that the prodigies related by Livy were introduced by another hand; we do not believe that the account of the signs at the destruction of Jerusalem was an interpolation into Tacitus: besides this, the style used in the relation of the miracles, the

* See Lardner's Credibility, Vol. I.

belief of the Fathers in them, and the testimony of heathen writers of a very early date to their being then in the Testament, leave us no room to doubt for a moment on this subject.

It cannot again be urged, that on account of the supernatural events recorded in the New Testament the whole is to be regarded as untrue : this is not our usual way of judging ; our belief in the natural circumstances cannot be reasonably shaken by the miraculous ; for although Livy, and other historians of good character, have recorded supernatural events, we do not believe that therefore their histories were forged or invented, nor do the prodigies related in them weaken our belief in the natural occurrences in the slightest degree.

No one can insist upon any alterations which may have been made in the New Testament

tament during the period through which it has existed as being sufficient to invalidate its authenticity: these must have been fewer than in the works of prophane Authors, in which they are universally judged of very trifling, or rather of no importance; I say, fewer, for the New Testament was more likely to be carefully preserved than any other book, and it would also be deemed an impiety to alter it.

As the New Testament then is genuine throughout*, as it bears the same marks of a

* With respect to one or two of the Epistles I am aware that some have thought their genuineness not so decidedly proved by external evidence as the other parts of the New Testament: the internal evidence is strong in their favour: but even if we were to admit that some doubts might be entertained concerning them, no conclusion unfavourable to the other parts of the New Testament could thence be drawn; for no one suspects the genuineness of all Plato's works, because a small portion of them is thought spurious; no one supposes that all Cicero's works are forgeries, because he did not write the *Consolatio*.

See Berkley's Minute Philosopher.

true

true relation which any heathen history bears, however credible ; as its precepts, the precepts of forbearance, charity, peace, and benevolence, are confessedly superior to the purest canons of philosophy ; and as its promises are agreeable to our noblest wishes, it is plain that the only difficulty attending its reception by some must arise from a reluctance to believe in the miracles recorded in it. Let us now consider this objection.

And here I would first observe that miracles appear perfectly consonant to a Divine Revelation, and therefore that they are found in the New Testament in those circumstances in which, of all others, it is most probable they should have been performed : and also that a want of miracles would have been accounted by the very persons who object to them, and certainly by others, a want of a material part of the evidence for a Divine Revelation ; this again in-

creases the probability that they actually took place.

I believe no one has yet denied that a miracle may be wrought: indeed as the original formation of the earth and of its inhabitants, and many other appearances which we daily meet with, must have been at first miraculous, we have proof positive that a miracle may be wrought, and has been wrought: but it has been said that a miracle, if wrought, can never be sufficiently evidenced to produce rational belief; for a miracle is a deviation from the common laws of nature, that is, it is contrary to our experience, and our belief in testimony is built on experience, therefore we may as well suppose that our experience should be contradicted in the latter, as in the former case. It is not difficult to answer this specious argument: let any one fix upon three persons with whom he has been long acquainted, who are all men of strict

strict integrity, and of good common understanding; suppose these three to agree in the relation of a fact totally contrary to experience and the common laws of nature; suppose them seriously to affirm that they were eye-witnesses to this fact; and let the fact be of a kind which it should be rather detrimental to their own interest, or to that of those connected with them, to relate, or at least which they have no temptation to tell if not true; I say, in this case, would the friend of these men believe their relation? No doubt; if he believed on reasonable grounds; for it would most undoubtedly be a more extraordinary contradiction to our experience, that they should give testimony to a falsehood, that such men should deceive without any temptation to it, or that all the three should have their faculties so changed as to be deceived themselves, than that any single supernatural event should happen; a superna-

tural event *may* certainly come to pass, that *honest* men should *deceive knowingly* and that *without any inducement to it, cannot* be the case; it is *impossible*: if the friend of these men therefore does not rely upon their testimony, does not believe the event which they relate, he *must* believe that the senses, or perception, or minds and characters of the three were instantaneously changed by miraculous means, that is, he must believe *three* miracles instead of *one*: as it is plain therefore that the friend of these men cannot possibly avoid believing in something miraculous, in something totally contrary to experience, he surely would determine more reasonably in believing one supernatural event than three, in believing what is the least than what is the most extraordinary: *I conclude, therefore, that there may be sufficient evidence to induce the rational belief of a miracle.*

This

This being premised, it remains to enquire whether the qualities which are to be expected in those whose evidence may be considered as decisive in miraculous events are to be found in the persons who bear testimony to the miracles recorded in the Gospel.

The qualities which we should reasonably expect in witnesses, and the only ones which we can desire, are honesty, and common sense, or the free use of their faculties: in a court of judicature two witnesses, in whom only the latter of these is evidently proved, are judged sufficient to decide on the life of a man: if, therefore, besides the competency of witnesses to judge, we can prove their honesty also, we have all that we can expect or require in a human being; and moreover, these qualities in witnesses, as I have just been proving, are amply sufficient to establish the rational belief of a miracle.

To

To apply this to the Authors of the New Testament; in the former part of this Essay, I have shewn that there is every reason at least which determines us on other occasions, to believe that the Apostles wrote the books and epistles attributed to them, and that the same persons who wrote the natural, wrote also the miraculous events: the Apostles therefore and their companions are the persons whose credibility is to be examined by the abovementioned standard.

Were they *honest*? The arguments which have been already urged as proofs of the truth of the Gospel relations, are in fact so many proofs of the honesty of those who wrote them: but, moreover, is it possible to receive from any one a more decided, unequivocal proof of honesty than his persisting in a relation which exposes him infallibly to danger and to great inconvenience? which inconvenience he not only

only exposes himself to by a bare testimony when called upon, but which he willingly encounters by a laborious spreading of his belief? now, could it even be proved (as some have imagined) that the Apostles and their companions did not suffer much during their mission, though there are abundant proofs to the contrary *, still it must be admitted that they had every thing to fear, that they readily offered themselves to receive the hatred which had raged against their master, and that they had little reason to expect mild treatment from those who had crucified him: besides this, Christ forewarned them of the reception which they should meet with in the world, that they should be hated and persecuted †: yet these men persevered in their course, without the most distant prospect of worldly advantage: can there be any doubt then of their honesty?

* See Lardner's Lives of the Apostles.

† St. John's Gospel, Chapter XV. 18.

With

With respect to their *competency as witnesses*, it may be observed, that St. Matthew and St. John were eye-witnesses, as we find from their books; that St. Mark and St. Luke certainly wrote from the relations of eye-witnesses, or from what they had themselves seen; and that the Authors of the Epistles were also eye-witnesses, or immediately connected with them: that the miracles recorded in the Gospel are of a kind which could not be counterfeited, that the mere use of their senses was all which was necessary for the witnesses to possess to preclude any possibility of their being deceived, that they were all competent to judge whether a paralytic man was instantaneously cured or not, whether Jesus Christ appeared to them after his death or not, whether they themselves, and others intimately known to them, spoke in

See Lardner's Credibility, Vol. II.

tongues

tongues which they had never learnt, or whether they did not ; and the same of the other miracles: we infer, therefore, that the Writers of the New Testament were no less competent to judge, than honest in their relation ; and of course then, if we do not believe their relation, must we not inevitably believe, either that honest men deceived knowingly, at the same time injuring themselves, which is impossible ? or else, that the faculties, or characters of all these persons were changed very frequently by supernatural interpositions ? this, however, is no less miraculous than any facts which they have related ; it is also supposing a much greater number of miracles to have been wrought ; and such miracles would be equally a proof of a Divine Revelation.

Such is the strength of the evidence of the Apostles and their companions when standing by itself: but a very strong argument in its fa-

your is to be drawn from the evidence, quite independent of theirs, of the accomplishment of Prophecies: for if any single miraculous interposition (such as prophecy) can be proved, the proof of other miracles is rendered easier: now we find in the Old Testament (the genuineness of which is in fact proved by that of the New) prophetic passages fulfilled by the appearance of Christ at the *time* in which he came into the world, at the *place* in which he dwelt, and by his *sufferings*; and this appearance and suffering of Christ at the time and in the place predicted, is proved by the testimony of *heathen* authors*: we have also unquestionable proofs of the fulfilment of the Prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem†, of the rise
of

* Tacitus, Suetonius and others.

† Tacitus, has recorded the destruction of Jerusalem; he, as well as Josephus and other heathens, who have mentioned this event, and also Pliny junior, who confirms

of Antichrist, and of the persecution of the Christians, and moreover we are ourselves eye-witnesses, at this day, to the accomplishment of the Prophecy of the spread of Christianity, and to that remarkable one, in the Old Testament, of the dispersion, but preservation of the Jews, as a distinct nation.

Perhaps some one may be here disposed to enquire why the Christians should receive as authentic the miracles recorded in the New Testament, and reject those of historians who bear a high character for veracity: it was the opinion of Dr. Hartley *, that it was impossi-

confirms the account of other prophane writers of the persecution of the Christians, may all be considered, by thus bearing witness to the fulfilment of prophecies, as giving in fact their testimony in favour of supernatural interpositions in the Christian dispensation.

* Observations on Man, Vol. II. Evidence for Christianity.

ble to prove all pagan miracles to be false, but I conceive they are usually regarded as being so for the following reasons; namely, that the historians relating them do not declare that they were eye-witnesses of them; nor did they hear them from eye-witnesses: that they often give room to think that they did not themselves believe them; that they evidently insert them in some cases through flattery; that the miracles they relate appear to have no important tendency; that the relation of them was never attended with any danger or inconvenience, but that the omission of them probably might: it may hence be inferred that the prophane historians had not the qualities required in credible witnesses with respect to the miraculous facts which they relate.

From the foregoing observations then it follows, that if we allow the same weight to the arguments for Christianity which we do to similar arguments

arguments on other occasions, they lead us to believe that the New Testament is a genuine production of those to whom it is attributed; that the facts both natural and miraculous recorded therein, are not inventions of the writers; that these facts can be proved by testimony; that the testimony of those who wrote them is that of men as much entitled to belief as any witnesses can possibly be; and that their evidence is still farther corroborated by the accomplishment of Prophecies in the Old and New Testament, to the fulfilment of some of which we are ourselves eye-witnesses at this day.

*OF THE CONNECTION OF PAIN AND
PLEASURE.*

THAT the cessation of pain is accompanied by pleasure, is a fact which has been repeatedly observed: if the remarks which I shall offer on this subject be not deemed sufficient to explain completely the cause of this connection between such opposite feelings, they may still, however, afford some assistance towards an investigation of it.

The organs of bodily sensations, whether of a pleasing or a painful kind, are decided by
various

various experiments to be the brain and nerves: the nerves conduct, and the brain receives impressions: this system, therefore, (as it is called) may be considered as capable of being in the state of pleasure, of pain, and of indifference.

Let us suppose a person in a state of indifference as to heat; upon coming near a fire he will experience at first an agreeable warmth, that is, pleasure; if the heat be increased this state of pleasure will, after a time, be converted into one of pain, from the increased action upon the nerves and brain: then let the heat be gradually withdrawn, the nervous system must acquire again, during this removal, the state of warmth, that is, pleasure, and finally, after passing through that state (the heat still being diminished) it will arrive at indifference: from this then we may conclude, that a state of pleasure may be increased or pushed
on

on till it is converted into one of pain; and, on the other hand, that any action which produces pain, will, if it gradually goes off, induce at a certain period of its decrease, a state of pleasure.

The same reasoning which has now been applied to the body may be extended also to the mind; total languor of mind is not so pleasant as a certain degree of action or emotion; and emotions pleasant at one period may be increased till they become painful; and of course then when any circumstance so acts upon or stimulates the mind as to raise it, and the nervous system, with which it is connected, to a state of pain, if such emotion gradually expires, it is plain that at a certain period of its decrease it will induce a state of pleasure: such a state lying between pain and indifference; above indifference and below pain.

P

Hence

Hence then we are able to explain why pleasure should arise in all cases from the *gradual* cessation of any action or emotion which produces pain.

But that excess of action which causes pain does not always go off *gradually*: organization may be destroyed, or the pain may be suddenly removed in other ways; still, however, its removal will be succeeded by pleasure: but pleasure cannot then arise in the same manner as when the action gradually abates; it must depend on some other cause: but the person who is relieved appears to have no new source of pleasure communicated to him, and supposing him previously to feeling the pain, to have been in a state of indifference, how should it happen, that from the mere removal of the pain he should experience pleasure?

In

In order to answer this question I must lay down the following law of Nature which is abundantly confirmed by experience, viz. "that the temporary withdrawal of any action from the body or mind invariably renders them more susceptible of that action when again produced." Thus after long fasting the body is more susceptible of the effects of food, than if the stomach had been lately satisfied; the action of strong liquors is found to be greater on those who use them seldom, than on such as are in the habit of drinking them: thus too with respect to the mind, if a person be deprived for a time of his friend's society, or of a favourite amusement, the next visit of his friend, or the next renewal of his amusement is attended with much more pleasure than if they had never been withheld from him.

To apply this law to the case of a person suddenly relieved from acute pain: while he labours with such pain his mind is totally occupied with it, and he is unable to attend to his customary pursuits or amusements: he becomes therefore more susceptible of their action by this withdrawal, and when they are again presented to him, their action is so much more powerful than before, that it raises him above indifference to pleasure*.

But, again, all pains do not proceed from an excess of action, they may arise from reducing the body, or the mind, to a state below indifference as well as from raising it to a state very high above it: thus if a person have

* It is not improbable that in cases of the gradual removal of pain also, the pleasure which succeeds may be sometimes increased from this cause.

just sufficient warmth in his body to keep him barely at ease, or in a state of indifference, by withdrawing this heat, that is by making him feel cold, a state of uneasiness or pain is induced: so also if a person whose mind is in a calm state, be made acquainted with a melancholy event, his quiet is interrupted, and he sinks below indifference into a painful state of mind: now in the former case, the mere removal of the cold is attended with pleasure, and in the latter case, the mere withdrawal of the grief; although no new source of pleasure is communicated in either case.

This I conceive to depend upon the law of Nature which I have just been stating; the consequence of the withdrawal of the cold, (which is effected by again communicating the portion of heat which had been lost) is
the

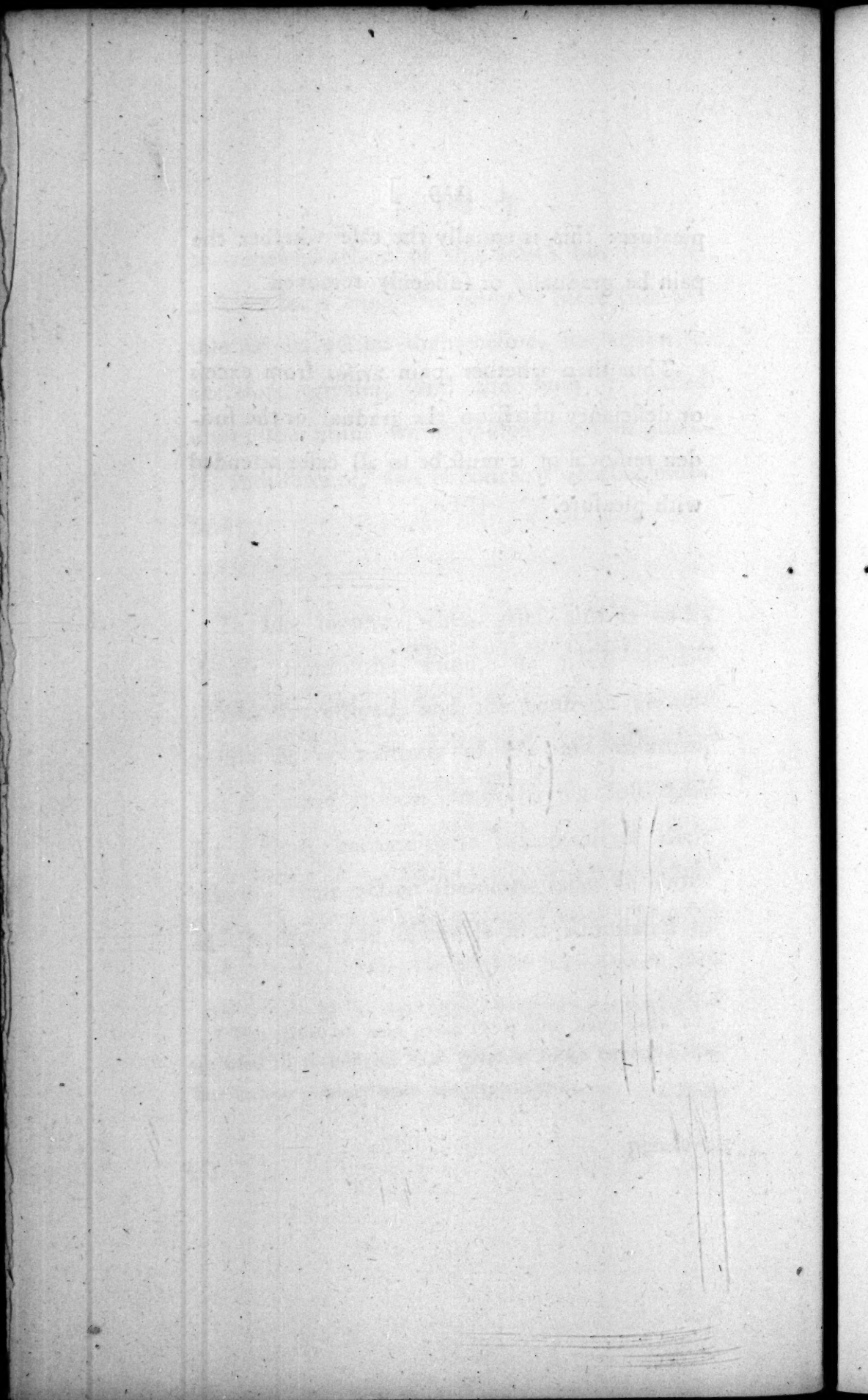
the renewed action of this heat; but from its absence for a time, the body is more susceptible of its action than before, its action is therefore greater, and the body is raised above the point we supposed it at originally, indifference, and of course it reaches pleasure*.

In like manner when grief also is withdrawn from the mind, its usual cheerfulness is restored, and the common amusements or occupations of life are resumed, but the mind is now, from having lost these for a time, become more susceptible of their action; their action therefore raises it above indifference, and of course it is stimulated to

* The action of heat upon those who have been long exposed to severe cold is so great as to go beyond pleasure and to produce even dangerous effects.

pleasure: this is equally the case whether the pain be gradually or suddenly removed.

Thus then whether pain arises from excess or deficiency of action, the gradual or the sudden removal of it must be in all cases attended with pleasure.



OF LUXURY.

LUXURY has been considered as detrimental to a state on different accounts: among other injurious tendencies which have been imputed to it, is that of its checking the increase of national riches; if the wealth of a kingdom, it has been urged, consists of the stock of productions raised from the ground, and of those formed by the labour of its inhabitants, whatsoever decreases this stock unnecessarily, which Luxury does, must of course diminish the wealth of the state.

Q

This

This argument appears at first sight conclusive; but a little attention will enable us, in a great degree, to avert it. Luxury may be defined a consumption or enjoyment of unnecessary commodities; now if there were no demand for such commodities, it is plain that they would never be produced, for no inducement or reward would be offered for producing them, and men will not labour without a reward; but Luxury causes a reward to be offered for them, and of course occasions their production; we therefore fairly arrive at this conclusion, that Luxury causes an increase of commodities in a state.

But if the produce of every year's labour in raising, fabricating, or importing unnecessary commodities be all consumed annually, then indeed the state is not permanently richer; but it is certainly richer for that year, since a
 quantity

quantity of unnecessary commodities have been in possession of it, though they have also been consumed: but the unnecessary commodities produced annually, are not all annually consumed; much of them remain, as houses, furniture, plate, pictures, books, &c. these are permanent riches to a kingdom, and in this way, therefore, Luxury causes the increase of the wealth of a state.

By the medium of Luxury again, the revenue, and sometimes the capital, of both the unproductive and productive classes of society, is thrown a great deal into the hands of the industrious; it there commonly assumes the form of stock in trade, and though all such stock is not permanent riches to a kingdom, (for articles of quick consumption can hardly be so deemed), yet much of the stock in trade, as shops, warehouses, buildings for manufactories, machines,

implements of art, &c. are permanent, and of course Luxury, in this way also increases the wealth of a state.

The mistake then of those who suppose that Luxury diminishes national wealth, arises from merely considering it as a consumer of commodities, without remembering that it is the same Luxury which creates a demand, which causes a reward to be offered for them, and without which they would never have been produced.

As one man can raise considerably more by his labour on the earth than would procure to himself the necessaries of life ; and considerably more, if he be a tenant, than would procure them to himself and to his landlord ; it is plain that in order to induce this man to exert himself to the utmost, and in order to induce his landlord

lord to diffuse his share of the produce of the earth, that they must both be tempted to it by the offer of other commodities besides those which are absolutely necessary in return, that is by Luxury: in this way then Luxury, by promoting the labour of the tiller of the ground, and by disposing both him and the possessor of the ground, willingly to part with their superabundant produce to the industrious, increases the population and happiness, as well as riches of a state. If two hundred men, (to repeat this statement) could by moderate labour support themselves and three hundred more, they must be induced to work a sufficient time to accomplish this by rewards offered them by the three hundred, that is by articles of Luxury fabricated or procured by them; and of course the moderate labour of these three hundred must be employed in accomplishing this; it is plain then that the state must thus be richer than if the two hundred

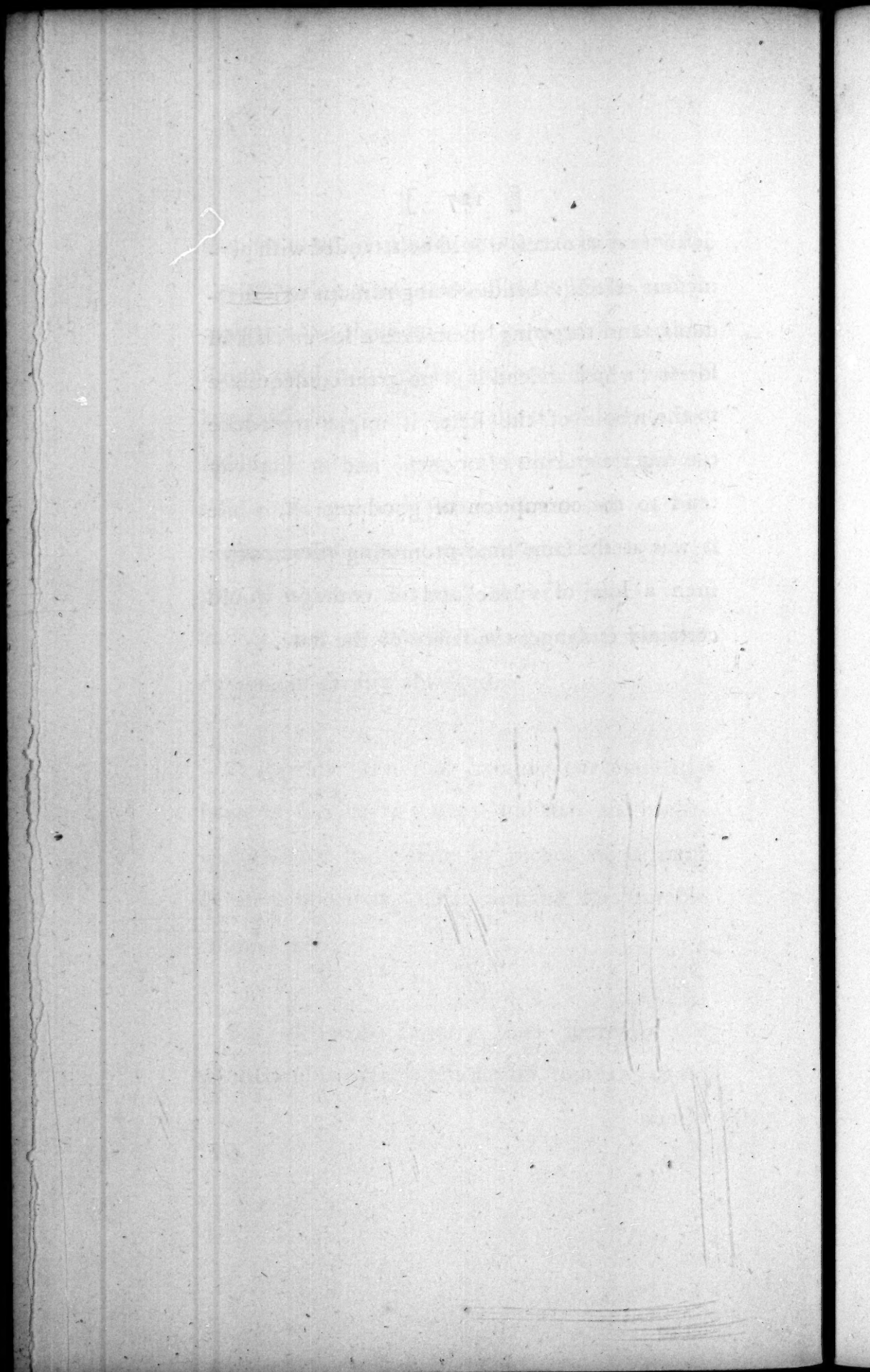
men

men (who are supposed to be all-sufficient for the purpose) were compell'd to work and to maintain the three hundred in idleness; but the state would not only be richer if they all work but also happier; the talents of all its inhabitants would then be called into action, this would produce various sources of convenience, amusement, and delight, the greater part of which would probably be otherwise unknown, and of course the aggregate sum of enjoyment greatly abridged.

It appears then that Luxury has evidently been of service to states; and that the riches accumulated in a state by means of it must be in proportion to the demand for durable commodities.

But although Luxury thus increases the wealth and happiness of a nation, there can be no doubt

doubt that its excess would be attended with pernicious effects: besides being ruinous to individuals, and throwing them into a lower class of society, which indeed is of no great consequence to the whole of the state, it might introduce too eager a pursuit of money, and in that way tend to the corruption of good morals, while it was at the same time promoting effeminacy: such a loss of virtue and of courage would certainly endanger the safety of the state.



OF ENGLISH METRES.

ALTHOUGH the greatest part of English poetry is written in rime, or in heroic blank verse, there appears no natural incapacity in the English language to admit of a more general introduction of unrimed measures; by means of emphasis it is no less easy to divide our own words than those of any other nation, into long and short syllables, and of course we are capable of imitating any of the forms of verse which are handed down to us from the ancients; if a peculiar arrangement of Latin or of Greek syl-

R

lables

lables be pleasing to the English ear, it is difficult to assign a cause why the same arrangement of English syllables should not be pleasing also.

The Germans have adopted a variety of the ancient measures into their Poetry with good effect; and indeed their most celebrated Epic-poem the Messiah, is written in Hexameter verse: they possess too, besides a variety of other pieces, translations from Horace and Anacreon, in which the measures of the originals have been imitated.

The English have not yet ventured upon so free an introduction of the ancient metres as the Germans, they are not, however, without many specimens of unrimed verse besides the heroic.

The

The complaint of Oenone, by George Peele, written about 1590, is a specimen of this kind, the lines are indeed in heroic measure, but they are thrown into regular stanzas; the first of them is the following:

Melpomene, the muse of tragicke songs,
With mournful tunes, in stole of dismall hue,
Assist a silly nymph to wail her woe,
And leave thy lustie company behind.

The Mourning Muse of Spencer is also written in rimeless verse; it begins thus:

Come forth, ye nymphs, come forth,
Forfake your watry bowers,
Forfake your mossy caves,
And help me to lament;
Help me to tune my doleful notes
To gurgling fount
Of Liffie's tumbling streams;
Come, let salt tears of ours
Mix with his waters fresh;

O come, let one consent

Join us to mourn with wailful plaints

The deadly wound.

In Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, we meet with a great variety of specimens of English Hexameter and Pentameter verse, beside other ancient metres; many harmonious lines may be selected from them. But as Sidney has formed his imitations upon a false principle, imagining that the English language was to be scanned, not by emphasis, but by position, like the languages of the ancients, we cannot be surprized that these compositions should be but little relished.

The measure used by Milton in his translation from Horace has been well received: it is adopted by Collins, in his Ode to Evening, and by other modern poets with success.

Dr.

Dr. Watts has imitated the Sapphic measure in an Ode, which has not been without its admirers, beginning "When the fierce North-wind, &c." the Poet has not, however, accurately arranged the feet of this Ode according to the model before him.

Glover has introduced into his *Medea* a variety of regular unrimed Odes; the following is no unpleasing specimen of the Choruses:

From the polish'd realms of Greece,

Where the arts and muses reign,

Truth and justice are expell'd.

Here from palaces and towers,

Snowy-vested faith is fled;

While beneath the shining roofs

Falsehood stalks in golden robes.

Dreary Caucasus! again

Take

Take us to thy frozen breast,
Let us shiver on thy ridge—

Cheering breeze with sportive pinion
Gliding o'er the crisped main,
With our tresses thou shalt wanton,
On our native sands no more.
Fountains, whose melodious waters
Cooling the Phæacian grotts,
Oft our eyes to sweetest slumbers
With their lulling falls beguil'd,
We have chang'd your soothing warble
For the doleful moan of woe,
And our peaceful moss deserting
Found a pillow thorn'd with care—

Beside the regular measures of the Greeks,
we find others in the Choruses of the Trage-
dians, which if not really written solely by
the ear of the poet, are, I believe, with some
difficulty reduced by the learned to any cer-
tain

tain rules. Milton, who in his choruses to Samson Agonistes, had evidently these measures in his view, has certainly allowed himself great liberty in forming lines, and seems to have considered it as a sufficient imitation of his model to write in the manner which to his own ear afforded harmony of verse. In the lines which are here transcribed he has perhaps succeeded as well as in any parts of these choruses:

Many are the sayings of the wise
 In ancient and in modern books enroll'd,
 Extolling patience as the truest fortitude;
 And to the bearing well of all calamities,
 All chances incident to man's frail life
 Consolatories writ;
 With studied argument, and much persuasion sought,
 Lenient of grief and anxious thought;
 But with th' afflicted in his pangs, their sound
 Little prevails, or rather seems a tone
 Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint,
 Unless

Unless he feel within
 Some source of consolation from above,
 Secret refreshings that repair his strength
 And fainting spirits uphold—

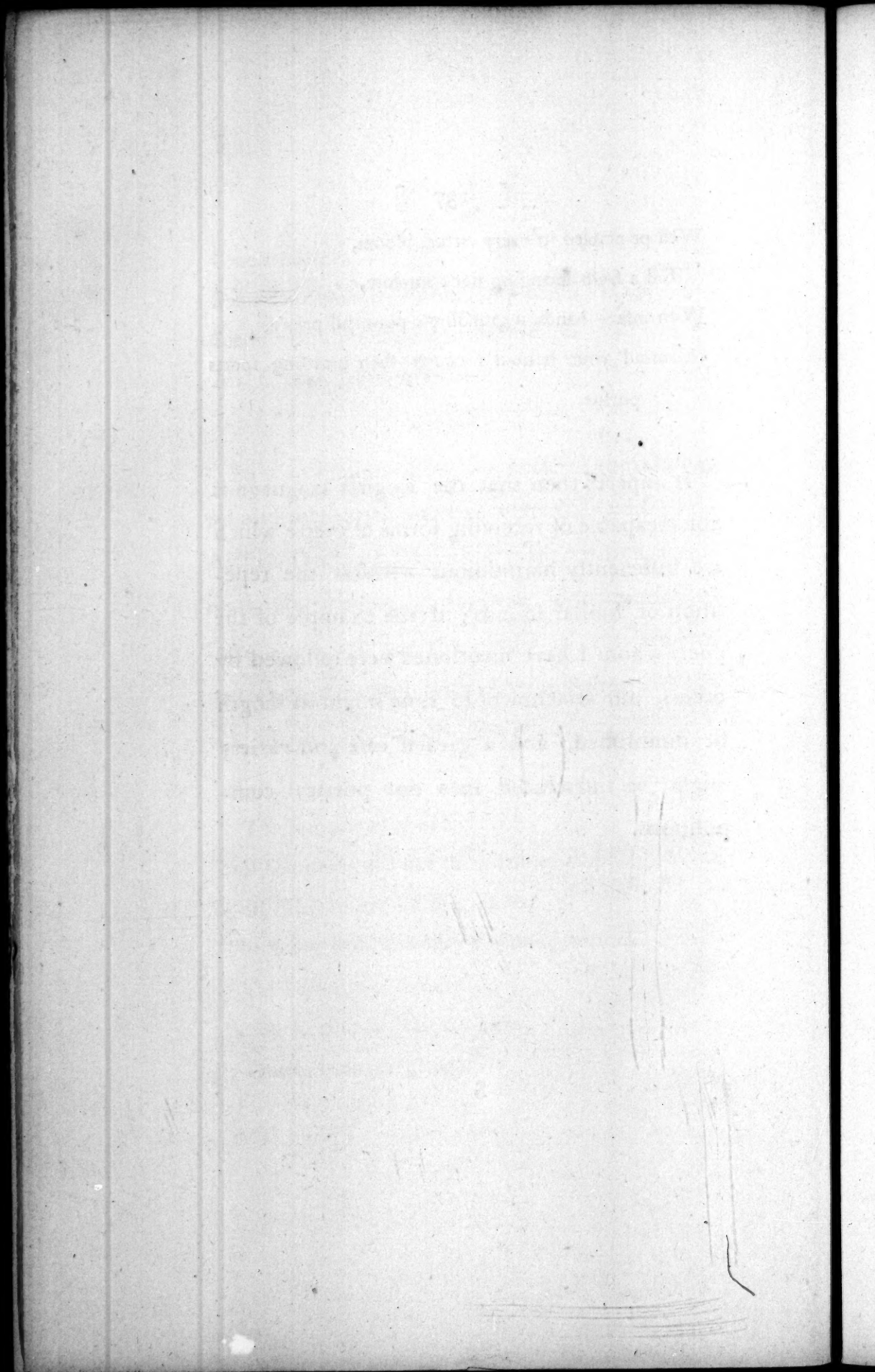
In a collection of Poems, entitled the Union,
 we also meet with an irregular Ode address'd to
 Arthur Onflow, Esq. this piece, which is re-
 markably pleasing to the ear, is compos'd of
 lines written upon the model of the ancient
 metres, intermix'd with Alexandrines and he-
 roic blank verse: it finishes thus,

The just memorial of fair deeds
 Still flourishes, and like th' untainted soul
 Blossoms in freshest age, above
 The weary flesh, and envy's rankling wound,
 Such after years mature
 In full account shall be thy meed,
 O may your rising hope,

Well

Well principled in every virtue, bloom,
 Till a fresh-springing flock implore,
 With infant hands, a grandfire's powerful pray'r,
 Or round your honour'd couch their prattling sports
 pursue.

It appears then that the English language is not incapable of receiving forms of metre which are sufficiently harmonious without the repetition of similar sounds; if the example of the poets whom I have mentioned were followed by others, our attachment to rime might at length be diminished, and a greater ease and variety might be introduced into our poetical compositions.



OF THE POETICAL CHARACTER OF
HORACE.

IN the list of Roman Poets who have been held up as the ornament of their country, a distinguished place has generally been allowed to Horace; I cannot, but suspect, however, that greater praise has been bestowed by many upon his poetical compositions than candid criticism will admit.

The author of whom I am treating was by no means solely prompted to write by the desire of acquiring reputation as a poet*:

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* Horace was the son of a freed-man of considerable property, his father not only procured him the best instructors, but watching himself over the conduct of his

he had a nobler object before him, that of promoting the virtue of the state: his first poetical attempts were satires; and throughout the greater
part

child with an attentive eye, laboured to implant in him, at an early age, a love of virtue with a contempt and abhorrence of vice. When his education at Rome was finished, Horace was sent to Athens; he was there engaged in philosophical pursuits when the civil war broke out, and he joined the partisans of liberty; he seems to have been sincere and active in their cause, for he was entrusted with the command of troops, and fought at Philippi. The loss of this battle was fatal to the freedom of Rome, and Horace was among the number of those whose estates were confiscated by the conquerors; soon after this period he appears to have first presented himself to the public as an author: finding all exertions for a change of government would be fruitless, and impelled, as he tells us, by poverty, which was not indeed literally the case, he began to exert those talents, which attracted, as he probably expected they would, the notice and the rewards of the great.

The friendship which he formed with Mæcenas and the Emperor was certainly favourable to the design, which Horace seems to have adopted from the time of his first publications, of turning his attention chiefly to moral subjects: he was encouraged, and sometimes perhaps requested

part of his productions he appears to have had constantly in his view, the inculcation of manly sentiments and useful maxims, the ridiculing of the follies and the reformation of the morals of his countrymen.

With such an aim as this we cannot wonder that Horace should have been so deeply engrossed as to have considered poetry rather as a pleasant means of instruction, than as a primary object of pursuit.

Ego me illorum dederim quibus esse poetas

Excerptam numero.

Serm. 1. 4.

But without insisting upon his own profes-

sions, requested by his patrons to direct his writings to the restoration of peace and good order, and to assail with ridicule and reproof, the licentiousness of the times: a task so agreeable to his inclinations, he performed during the greater part of his life, with ability and steadiness.

sions, it will readily be granted, that it is in his Lyric pieces alone that we are to look for a display of his poetical talents: to these then we shall turn our attention.

The ode, like any other piece of poetical composition, is written with some determined end; and this end should be one: whether a hero is to be praised, a mourner to be soothed, a virtue to be inculcated, or a vice to be reproved, the subject of the ode is single and defined; of the great direction and purpose of the performance therefore the poet should never lose sight; an unconnected groupe of thoughts and images, however striking or affecting, form not a good ode; whatever is introduced should evidently tend to the end which is in view, whatever is unconnected with this end is idle, and ineffective, and spoils that wholeness which is essential

tial to the excellence of the piece: Neither is it all-sufficient merely to unite the different passages or portions of the ode with the theme on which it is written; the poet must not stop here; the passages must also be united among themselves, the mind should glide with ease from one part to the next, the link between them should be plainly discernible, or the piece is a mere cento. Connection of component parts, together with wholeness (if I may so express it) are essential to the perfection of the ode.

But the lyric compositions of Horace, beside being very often deficient in these requisites, are not unfrequently displeasing from a want of simplicity, and from their inequality both in style and in thought.

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To attempt the proof of these assertions by an elaborate critique on the writings of this Author would far exceed the limits of an essay; I shall content myself with producing some instances of his deficiencies which are to be met with even in his more celebrated odes.

Let us shortly examine the ode to Iulus: this piece has by some been exalted as the rival of the Lyrics of Pindar, and may be selected as a composition in which Horace has greatly exerted himself. It begins with the comparison of the poet who imitates Pindar to a person trusting to artificial wings in his flight over the sea; this is far-fetched; Pindar is then compared to a river overflowing its banks; this is no doubt a just simile; the subjects of which this poet treats are next enumerated; Horace then compares Pindar to a swan and himself to a bee; then abruptly addressing Iulus, he
desires

desires him to sing the triumph of Augustus, whom our poet compliments in a high strain, and finishes with telling his friend to sacrifice on the occasion of this triumph, ten bulls and cows, while he himself shall offer up a calf: nearly two stanzas are occupied in the description of this victim. It is sufficiently evident that this ode is remarkably faulty as to unity of design, and its subject matter, it can claim upon the whole but little approbation. Another poem of this Author's, which has also been greatly admired, is the ode to Calliope; after beginning with an address to the Goddess, Horace relates the dangers from which he was preserved by the care of the Muses, and expresses his reliance on their future protection: in this part of the ode we meet with a long list of names of places, than which nothing can be more tedious in poetry; he next desires the Muses to recreate Cæsar after

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his labours; then follows a description, (by no means well connected with what precedes) of the war of the Titans, and this description necessarily abounds with the proper names of Gods; he then remarks upon the excellence of wisdom, and finishes with an account of the sufferings of the Giants: by the introduction of this war, I apprehend, the poet means it should be inferred that the Gods were indebted to wisdom as much as to strength, for their victory over the ignorant though daring Titans: surely this starting into mythology to compliment Calliope is no very excellent expedient; may I presume to observe, that it would have been much more natural, as well as interesting, to have described the effects really produced by the humanizing Muses, than to have insisted upon the importance of prudence in this imaginary battle: how would the pen of Ovid have charmed

charmed upon a subject so delightful, and so rich in beautiful appendages. In the ode "*Laudabunt alii claram Rhodon aut Mytelenen,*" we meet with so striking a want of connection, that many have been induced to believe some of it lost; even with this allowance, it has not the slightest pretensions to wholeness: the style of the ode "*O Navis, referent in mare te novi,*" borders upon the bombast; the ode to Fortune, though it has a splendid beginning, sinks in its progress: the celebrated ode "*Angustam amici pauperiem pati,*" falls off remarkably towards the end, and introduces a new subject foreign from the rest of the piece; and in the ode "*Inclusam Danaen turris ahenea,*" we meet with some lines which are better suited to the *Sermones*.

A careful perusal of the works of Horace

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will, I am persuaded, furnish other instances of imperfections of a similar kind; those which I have mentioned are sufficient to shew that his poems of the loftier cast are far from being compleat in their kind; I am, however, by no means unwilling to acknowledge, that some may be selected from them which are well deserving of approbation, and that among his lighter odes, The “*Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa,*” the “*Vile potabis modicis Sabinum,*” into which, a compliment to Mæcenas is so dexterously introduced, and the “*Perficos odi puer apparatus,*” are well entitled to the highest praise which they have hitherto received.

Horace is certainly distinguished by various excellencies; the man of elegance, of good sense, of delicate humour and keen penetration*, the

* *Terfior ac purus magis Horatius, et ad notandos mores hominum præcipuus.*

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philosopher

philosopher and the sound critic are prevalent throughout his works; such is the praise which no one will deny to him: but that high and unqualified applause which he has received as a Lyric poet, is certainly more than he can claim from his productions, and cannot, but in some degree, have arisen from an indiscriminating partiality to the works of the ancients.

T H E E N D.